

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1644

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to health care eligibility for part-time academic employees of community and technical colleges.

Brief Description: Modifying health care eligibility provisions for part-time academic employees of community and technical colleges.

Sponsors: By Representatives Kenney, Sells, Anderson, Appleton, Morrell, Linville, Roberts, Ormsby, McDermott, Conway, Schual-Berke and Haigh; by request of Health Care Authority.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/14/07, 2/21/07 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/9/07, 97-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/12/07, 47-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies health care benefits eligibility requirements for community and technical college part-time faculty.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hasegawa, McIntire and Sommers.

Staff: Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

Background:

Part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges, who are employed on a quarter/semester to quarter/semester basis, are eligible for health benefits beginning the second consecutive quarter of half-time or greater employment. Prior to 2006, they were also eligible

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for health benefits during the summer, regardless of summer quarter workload, if they worked half-time or more in three of the four quarters preceding the summer quarter. However, part-time academic employees who worked less than half-time in a quarter lost benefits for that quarter as well as the following summer quarter.

Legislation enacted in 2006 provides continued eligibility for health benefits through the summer for part-time academic employees who work at least half-time, on average, in each of the two preceding academic years. Once that requirement is met, benefits continue as long as the employee works half-time or more for at least three of the four quarters of the academic year. Benefits continue through the end of the academic year if eligibility ceases during the academic year.

Summary of Bill:

Summer quarter is removed from the definition of academic year. Therefore, part-time employees are eligible for benefits during the summer, regardless of the summer quarter workload, if they have worked an average of half-time or more for three quarters in each of the preceding two years. Benefits continue as long as the employee works half-time or more in two of the three quarters of the academic year (instead of the current three of the four quarters). Benefits cease as soon as the employee no longer meets eligibility requirements.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

Retains the current statutory definition of academic year, which includes summer quarter. Once eligible for health care benefits, an employee will continue to receive such benefits if the employee works at least two quarters of the academic year with an average academic workload of half-time or more for three quarters of the academic year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a clean-up bill to a bill passed last year. It reflects the agreement reached on a Senate amendment that did not get into the final bill because time ran out in the session.
(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Dennis Martin, Health Care Authority; Wendy Rader-Konafalski, Washington Education Association; and John Boesenberg, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.